

WHISPERING PINES WINTER YURT GUIDE

The Whispering Pines yurt is located off the groomed Gold Fork Loop trail. This is a popular loop used by Nordic skiers and snowshoers. The yurt provides easy access to over 27 miles of groomed and 50 miles of marked ski trails. The yurt is located in a high shaded glen. The view from the yurt is one of pine tree covered ridges. The outhouse has a great view of Pilot Peak. Snow is usually available for skiing from December 1 to April 7.

Reservations:

Reservations for stays within IDPR Idaho City Backcountry Yurts can be online at www.parksandrecreation.idaho.gov or toll free 1-866-634-3246. Reservations are accepted 9-months in advance of your intended stay and no later than 48-hours prior to your intended arrival. A non-refundable fee of \$6 is assessed at the time your reservation is made. All fees must be paid in advance of your stay.

Yurts are reserved from 2 p.m. the day of your reservation until 1 p.m. the following afternoon. The maximum length of stay in the same yurt is 5 days.

Difficulty:

Advanced beginner to intermediate. The difficulty of touring trails can increase in poor snow conditions and weather. Skiers can expect a steady climb on the north side of the Gold Fork Loop. Climbing skins are recommended for those with heavy packs. Individuals should be thoroughly prepared and travel with someone who has been to the yurt and can readily find it. The Gold Fork Loop is generally groomed on Thursday or Friday from December 1 to March 15. You should not count on the trail being groomed, but a freshly groomed trail will substantially reduce the amount of energy necessary to get to the yurt.

Where to Park:

The Gold Fork Park N' Ski parking lot is about 20 miles north of Idaho City on Highway 21. An Idaho Park N' Ski permit is required to park here Nov 15th to Apr 30th. Please park your vehicles close together and parallel to the side of the lot, south of the toilet. You should also bring a shovel because you might have to dig your car out in case of heavy snow. Do not park on Highway 21.

How to Get to the Yurt: The trails are marked with blue or yellow diamond shapes, called blazes, attached to trees and posts.

Skiing in:

The recommended skiing approach to the yurt is to take the Gold Fork Loop counter-clockwise from the north end of the parking lot. Follow the blue blazes for about 2.4 miles. At the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/Moose trails intersection you will see a large (2') yellow sign. Follow the yellow blazes about 400 yards until you

see the yurt. **You cannot see the yurt from the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/Moose trails intersection.**

Snowshoeing in:

An alternate way to the Whispering Pines yurt is to take the single-track Moose trail. This trail starts just south of the parking lot toilet on the Gold Fork Loop trail. Follow the blue blazes for about 1.4 miles until you reach the Moose/ Lodgepole/ Gold Fork intersection. At the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/Moose trails intersection you will see a large (2') yellow sign. Follow the yellow blazes about 400 yards until you see the yurt. **You cannot see the yurt from the Gold Fork/Lodgepole/ Moose trails intersection.**

Elevation Gain and Distance:

About 330 feet over 2.5 miles (one-way).

Water:

The nearest water is about 1 mile away and is not easily accessible in the winter. Your best bet is to use the large pot provided to melt snow on the wood stove. We recommend boiling the water for 10 minutes before using.

Wood Pile:

Wood for the stove is located under the yurt deck. You may have to dig your way to the woodpile.

Special Equipment Needed:

Several members of the party should carry portable snow shovels.

Maps Needed:

Idaho City Area Yurt and Trail System, USFS Forest Road, and USGS 7.5 minute topographic, "Lowman and Big Owl Creek."

Global Positioning System Locations

UTM (in NAD 83 Projection):

Gold Fork Parking Lot: 11T 0611769 481929

Whispering Pines Yurt: 11T 0611096 4872626

Lat/Long (in NAD 83 Projection):

Gold Fork Parking Lot: 43.992/-115.606

Whispering Pines Yurt: 43.998/-115.614

Altitudes:

Gold Fork Parking Lot: 5,226 feet

Whispering Pines Yurt: 5,563 feet

WARNING:

Winter travel and the use of the yurt can be dangerous. Do not undertake yurt trips without careful preparation and a serious discussion of the dangers with All your group.

PLEASE, DO NOT FEED ANY WILD ANIMALS. IT CAN LEAD TO THE ANIMALS CHEWING OR TEARING THE YURT SKIN.